

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 641

By Brooks K

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Civil Air Patrol.

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol was founded on December 1, 1941, by a fledgling group of volunteers led by civilian pilots who flew their own planes at their own expense to support America's efforts in World War II, primarily by flying reconnaissance missions near the country's coasts to protect cargo ships, especially vital oil tankers, which were being sunk at such an alarming rate that, according to United States Army General George Marshal, "now threaten our entire war effort"; and

WHEREAS, so many submarines were spotted by these "subchasers" that a decision was soon made by the military to arm their light aircraft with small bombs and their larger aircraft with three hundred twenty-five pound depth charges, putting these brave civilian pilots at great risk, because they were often flying one hundred miles or more from shore in all kinds of weather; and

WHEREAS, over the next year and a half, these subchasers played an integral role in the defense of America's homeland during World War II, spotting one hundred forty-three German submarines, attacking fifty-seven, and sinking two, while directing shore-based fighting units to their targets and forcing the German Navy to move further offshore; and

WHEREAS, the wartime effort, which included border patrol operations, search and rescue, disaster relief, forest fire patrol, emergency transportation of personnel and critical cargo, and towing practice targets for the United States military, also resulted in the loss of twenty-six members and ninety aircraft in the war's beginning stages and sixty-four deaths and one hundred fifty lost aircraft by war's end; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol was heralded as a great success, prompting President Harry Truman to sign Public Law 474 in 1946, which made the Civil Air Patrol a benevolent, nonprofit organization. Nearly two years later in 1948, the United States Congress passed Public Law 557, permanently establishing the Civil Air Patrol as the auxiliary of the newly formed United States Air Force, with three primary missions: Emergency Services, Cadet Programs, and Aerospace Education; and

WHEREAS, since that auspicious beginning, a modern day Civil Air Patrol has emerged to become one of the nation's premier humanitarian service organizations, saving lives, finding those who are lost, helping fellow citizens in times of disaster, working to keep America safe, preparing future leaders, offering aerospace education to inspire our nation's youth, and honoring our military; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol, enriched and strengthened by a late-century revolution in search and rescue technology, has become known worldwide for its unique emergency services operations, performing vital search and rescue, disaster relief, and other important emergency missions for what now numbers more than sixteen hundred communities across each of America's fifty states, as well as the nation's capitol and Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol, supported by the world's largest fleet of single-engine aircraft equipped with high-tech toolboxes like full-motion video, infrared cameras, and glass cockpits, has established itself among this nation's search and rescue elite, now participating in up to ninety percent of the United States Air Force's inland search and rescue missions; and

WHEREAS, in the past year alone, many of the Civil Air Patrol's professional volunteers, backed by the Patrol's own cell phone forensics and radar tracking experts, left their families and their homes, often in adverse weather conditions, to participate in one thousand sixteen search and rescue missions in which they were credited with saving one hundred thirteen lives; and

WHEREAS, as a top resource for disaster relief, the Civil Air Patrol is often first on the scene, providing aerial photography and damage assessment, as well as ground team support, to help emergency officials pinpoint critical infrastructure needs in real time, and often providing

door-to-door relief services, which include water, food, and supply delivery and even laundry services, for victims; and

WHEREAS, recent high-profile Civil Air Patrol missions have included responses to tornadoes that ravaged communities across America, forest fires in numerous states, Hawaiian Island and Pacific Coast tsunamis, Hurricanes Katrina and Ike devastation, wildfires in the southwestern United States, Midwest flooding, aid and assistance in the wake of the 9/11 invasion on American soil, and counterdrug missions across the nation that have helped remove over one billion dollars in illegal drugs from our communities; and

WHEREAS, the aircraft of the Civil Air Patrol were the only non-military planes allowed in the skies over the United States in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, and the Civil Air Patrol has since performed admirably in other homeland security missions, including responding to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, a one hundred eighteen day continuous effort, by taking tens of thousands of aerial photographs necessary for assessing environmental damage, deploying containment assets, and successfully working side by side with numerous state and federal agencies. It is estimated the Civil Air Patrol's involvement in this historic disaster saved the federal government twenty-two million to thirty-eight million dollars in the cost of services that were rendered; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol sets the world standard for volunteer aviation emergency services, prompting other nations like Denmark and the United Kingdom to use the Civil Air Patrol model to establish or improve their own similar volunteer organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol's youth program currently includes more than twenty-six thousand five hundred cadets who benefit from a curriculum that trains them to be leaders, offers them opportunities for flight, including pilot training, and teaches them emergency services techniques, including lifesaving; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol's personnel reach tens of thousands of the country's school-aged children and their teachers with a comprehensive selection of academic programs that stress the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and math, in addition to programs that encourage a drug-free lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Air Patrol's membership includes a Chaplain Corps with eight hundred sixty-eight members who fulfill critical needs for deployed United States military chaplains, and provide counseling services for soldiers and their families, as well as disaster victims; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with Wreaths Across America, the Civil Air Patrol annually honors military veterans by helping sponsor and place tens of thousands of wreaths at the gravesites of fallen soldiers at United States military cemeteries nationwide and overseas during the Christmas holiday season; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that this General Assembly should pause to recognize the Civil Air Patrol on the occasion of its 70th anniversary, gratefully and humbly acknowledging the countless missions conducted by this volunteer organization in service to this nation and its people in times of war and peace; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Civil Air Patrol, and that we express our profound gratitude to the extraordinary women and men who have sacrificed their time and talents in pursuit of the mission of this noble and patriotic organization. We are deeply appreciative of the valuable contributions they make to assure our nation ever remains strong and free.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.